

Prestige Class
Bladesinger
With Sword and Spell
By Creighton Broadhurst



This column aims to provide players with tips on creating effective and interesting characters of various types. So, whether you're a beginning player creating your very first character or an experienced gamer looking to put some punch into an old standby, this column is for you.

Assets

Bladesingers are strong combatants and have the following useful abilities:

- **Good Attack Bonus:** A bladesinger's base attack bonus progresses as a fighter's (see Table 3-1 in the *Player's Handbook*), which is the best in the game.
- **Good Reflex Saves:** Bladesingers use the best progression for Reflex saving throws (see Table 3-1 in the *Player's Handbook*) in the game.
- **Good Will Saves:** Bladesingers use the best progression for Will saving throws (see Table 3-1 in the *Player's Handbook*) in the game.
- **Good Class Abilities:** Bladesingers gain a number of useful class abilities that allow them to combine their fighting and spellcasting abilities. Bladesong style allows them to add a dodge bonus to their armor class, as long as this does not exceed their Intelligence bonus. Lesser spellsong lets them take 10 on Concentration checks to cast defensively, while song of celerity enables them to quicken one or more spells as if they have the Quicken Spell feat. At higher levels, they can ignore light armor's arcane spell failure chance. Finally, at 10th-level, bladesingers gain song of fury, which lets them make additional melee attacks.
- **Spell Progression:** Every odd-numbered level, a bladesinger gains new spells per day (and spells known if applicable) in one arcane spellcasting class she belonged to before becoming a bladesinger.



Weaknesses

A bladesinger's advantages come at a price. Here are a few things to consider when thinking about a bladesinger character:

- **Poor Fortitude:** Bladesingers have the worst progression for Fortitude saving throws in the game (see Table 3-1 in the *Player's Handbook*).
- **Poor Skill Points:** Bladesingers gain a poor amount of skill points (2 + Int modifier) with every class level, but many skills are useful to them. Bladesingers should invest in Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Spellcraft, and Tumble. Luckily, lesser spellsong means they do not need to maximize their ranks in Concentration -- as long as they can automatically cast their highest-level spell while casting defensively, they are fine.
- **Hard Qualification:** Bladesinger is a hard class for which to qualify. Prospective bladesingers must be either an elf or half-elf; they need a high base attack bonus (+5), ranks in Balance, Concentration, Perform (dance), Perform (sing), and Tumble; the feats Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Weapon Focus (longsword or rapier); and must be able to cast 1st-level arcane spells. The skill requirements in particular make it difficult for a fighter/wizard to qualify for this prestige class by 7th level. (Taking levels in other classes can mitigate this to some extent, but elves, in particular, should be careful to avoid an experience point penalty for multiclassing).

Playing a Bladesinger

People who play efficient bladesingers should keep the following in mind:

Character Build

Qualifying for this prestige class by 7th level is difficult. Bladesingers need skill ranks in several skills (Balance, Perform [dance], Perform [sing], and Tumble) which do not appear on the skill lists for many martial or arcane spellcasting classes. This means that prospective bladesingers must buy them cross-class (an expensive proposition given the meager number of skill points gained by many classes) or take levels in classes that allow them to buy these as class skills -- bard, monk, and rogue all satisfy this requirement. Luckily, an elf's favored class is wizard. A half-elf counts her highest-level class as favored, which also allows some flexibility when multiclassing to qualify for bladesinger.

Because the prestige class requires four feats for qualification, a prospective member almost certainly needs to take at least one level of fighter if he wants to qualify for bladesinger by 7th level. (Characters taking two levels of duskblade get Combat Casting as a bonus feat, meaning that such characters don't necessarily need to take a level of fighter).

A prospective bladesinger can take a level in many classes to be able to cast 1st-level arcane spells. First-level sorcerers, wizards, duskblades (*PHB II*), beguilers (*PHB II*), wu jen (*Complete Arcane*), and warmages (*Complete Arcane*) all fill this requirement, as do higher-level bards, hexblades (*Complete Warrior*), and spellthieves (*Complete Adventurer*).

Finally, bladesinger mixes well with several other prestige classes, namely eldritch knight (*DMG*), spellsword (*Complete Warrior*), and abjurant champion (*Complete Mage*). Bladesingers should strongly consider factoring a level of one or more of these classes into their development.

Sword and Spell

A bladesinger is never going to compete with a single-classed wizard or sorcerer in terms of damage output or raw power (and they shouldn't try). Rather, a bladesinger should use his spells to augment his own combat abilities. Any spell that increases armor class or ability to hit and deal damage is useful to a bladesinger.

Because they get into melee so often, bladesingers need good armor class but can't use a shield if they want to use their lesser spellsong or bladesong style abilities. While bladesong style increases armor class, the bladesinger gains its benefit only while wearing light or no armor. A bladesinger, therefore, should buy the best light armor that she can afford (and enchant it), pairing it with a *ring of protection* and *amulet of natural armor* as soon as possible. *Shield*, *blur*, *cat's grace*, *blink*, *displacement*, and *stoneskin* all make a bladesinger harder to hit. (There are also lots of other great spells for a bladesinger -- for example, *shieldbearer* and *burning sword* from the *Spell Compendium*).

Bladesingers able to cast 3rd-level spells should give serious thought to taking Arcane Strike (*Complete Warrior* 96), because it enables them to channel their spells into their weapon, increasing their attack bonus and damage dealt. Battlecaster Defense and Battlecaster Offence (both *Complete Mage* 39-40) both increase a bladesinger's tactical options in combat. Bladesingers of 6th level or higher who want to improve their armor class (particularly those with a low Intelligence bonus) should take Battle Caster (*Complete Arcane* 75) -- it allows them to wear medium armor while avoiding the chance of arcane spell failure.

If the bladesinger has no, or few, levels of fighter, they should also take Great Fortitude to boost their Fortitude saving throw. (This is particularly true of elves, who normally have lower Constitutions than half-elves).

Bladesingers with several levels in classes other than their arcane spellcasting class should consider Practiced Spellcaster (*Complete Arcane* 82) to boost the efficacy of their spells.

Recommended Bladesinger Spells

- 0 -- *flare**, *resistance*
- 1 -- *enlarge person*, *magic weapon*, *shield*, *true strike**
- 2 -- *alter self*, *bear's endurance*, *blur**, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *false life*
- 3 -- *blink*, *displacement**, *greater magic weapon*, *haste*, *heroism*, *rage*
- 4 -- *fire shield*, *polymorph*, *stoneskin*
- 5 -- *Bigby's interposing hand*
- 6 -- *Bigby's forceful hand*, *Tenser's transformation*
- 7 -- *Bigby's grasping hand*, *spell turning*
- 8 -- *Bigby's clenched fist*, *iron body*, *moment of prescience*, *protection from spells*
- 9 -- *Bigby's crushing hand*

* No somatic component. Spells without somatic components have no chance of arcane spell failure.

Arcane Spell Failure

Arcane spell failure is a constant problem for most bladesingers until they get to 6th level. At that point, they can ignore the arcane spell failure chance of light armor. (Bladesingers with levels in beguiler, duskblade, or warmage ignore the arcane spell failure chance of light armor when casting spells gained from those classes). Like other arcane spellcasters who wear armor, bladesingers can overcome the problem of arcane spell failure in several ways.

Extend Spell: Some spells (such as *false life*, *protection from arrows*, and *overland flight*), when combined with Extend Spell, last for a sizable part of a day (although extended spells take up a spell slot one higher than normal). Bladesingers often cast these spells before putting on their armor, obviating its arcane spell failure chance.

Still Spell: Taking Still Spell allows bladesingers to cast spells without their somatic components. A stilled spell takes up a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level but has no chance of arcane spell failure.

Use Magic Items: While scrolls are treated as spells in terms of arcane spell failure chance, other wondrous items such as wands and staves are not. Thus, a bladesinger can wear any kind of armor he desires and use such magic items without fear of arcane spell failure.

Wear Mithral Armor: Armor made from mithral reduces its arcane spell failure chance by 10%. The *twilight* armor special quality (*Player's Handbook II*) further reduces this by 10%. Thus, a bladesinger could wear a +1 *twilight mithral chain shirt* and have no arcane spell failure chance.

Sample Bladesinger: Valanthe Galanodel

Tall and slender with long, braided black hair, this female elf moves with grace and skill.

Valanthe Galanodel CR 10

Female elf rogue 2/duskblade 3/fighter 2/bladesinger 3

CG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16; Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility, bladesong style (+3 Dex, +1 class, +5 armor, +1 natural)

hp 67 (10 HD)

Immune *sleep*

Resist evasion

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +6; +2 against enchantments

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); Spring Attack

Melee +1 *longsword* +11/+6 (1d8+4/19-20)

Ranged mwk longbow +10/+5 (1d8+3/x3)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Atk Options arcane channeling, sneak attack +1d6

Special Actions lesser spellsong

Combat Gear potion of *cure serious wounds*, wand of *blade of blood** (25 charges)

Duskblade Spells Known (CL 5th; ranged touch +8):

2nd (3/day) -- *bear's endurance*

1st (6/day) -- *blade of blood**, *ray of enfeeblement*, *resist energy*, *shocking grasp*, *swift expeditious retreat**

0 (6/day) -- *acid splash*, *disrupt undead*, *touch of fatigue*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th):

4/day (total) -- *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ armored mage (light), elf traits, trapfinding

Feats Combat Casting(B), Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Toughness, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Balance +13, Climb +4, Concentration +5 (+9 casting defensively), Escape Artist +7, Hide +13, Jump +10, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Perform (dance) +1, Perform (sing) +1, Search +5, Spellcraft +7, Spot +7, Swim +6, Tumble +13

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *mithral shirt*, +1 *longsword*, masterwork composite longbow (+3 Str bonus) with 20 arrows, 10 cold iron arrows, and 10 silver arrows, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *cloak of elvenkind*

Arcane Channeling (Su) As a standard action, Valanthe can cast any touch spell she knows and deliver the spell through her weapon with a melee attack. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Lesser Spellsong (Ex) Valanthe can take 10 when making a Concentration check to cast defensively while

holding her longsword in one hand and nothing in the other.

* new spell from *Player's Handbook II*

Valanthe Galanodel had the following statistics before racial adjustments, hit die increases, and stat boosting items: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Had a chance to try out the bladesinger prestige class? [Let us know your thoughts](#) on how it played or what changes you would make to it.

About the Author

Creighton Broadhurst is a member of [Living Greyhawk's Circle of Six](#) and a mad-keen *World of Greyhawk* fan. He has two young sons (whom he nicknames "Ghengis" and "Khan"). His house is an oasis of tranquility, tidiness, and order. In his spare time, he tries to survive the Savage Tide.
